

# Hot News



## EBLIDA newsletter on EU library & information society issues

November 2001

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### **Information sources used for this issue include:**

Bulletin Quotidien Europe

[Cordis](#)

[EUR-Lex](#): European Union law

[Europa](#) website

[European Parliament](#) Press Service

[European Voice](#)

[ISPO](#)

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EBLIDA encourages dissemination of our information. However, we would ask that the source be acknowledged. Documents are available at the EBLIDA Secretariat. For more information, contact Carmen Morlon, EU Information Officer, email: [morlon@nblc.nl](mailto:morlon@nblc.nl)

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## Audiovisual

### Commission and Council latest developments on audiovisual matters

The European Commission presented on 5 November, a Communication on the legal aspects of the cinema industry in Europe, which includes ways of improving the conservation of the European cinema heritage and on the distribution of films. According to EFCA, the European Film Companies Alliance, this Communication (26 September 2001) prevents the European cinema industry from being competitive and contradicts other policies like the Media Plus programme or the 'i2i' initiative. In addition, the establishment of a distinction between 'commercial' and 'cultural' based on budget contradicts the EU position in the context of multilateral trade negotiations.

A second Communication on the application of [State aid rules to public service broadcasting](#) (OJ no 2001/C 320/04 of 15.01.01, p.5) was also presented. On the basis of the Treaty rules, it is up to member states to determine how to help their public service. Governments will decide therefore, on the contents of their public service by defining the tasks and choose how these should be financed. The public service will be monitored by an independent institution or authority.

Moreover, Culture ministers adopted on 5 November, a [resolution](#) on developing the audiovisual sector to see the sector occupy a significant place in the world audiovisual area. Furthermore, Finance ministers discussed on 6 November, the need for a study on the impact of certain tax measures on the audiovisual sector. Where indirect taxation was concerned, Commissioner Bolkestein explained that the question of taxation on audiovisual/music products will be tackled in the general review of the reduced rates, in the context of the sixth VAT directive, (Commission report due end of 2002).



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### Parliament own-initiative report calls for better distribution of European films

Europe produces more films than the USA. However, the market share of European films in EU cinemas fell in 2000 to its lowest recorded level, 22.5% compared to that of 73.7% for American films. On 12 November, Parliament voted in favour of a resolution which aims at making the European film industry more competitive. Parliament wants the Commission, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Investment Fund, via its 'i2i' initiative, to focus on funding of transnational distribution channels for European films. Moreover, the Commission is asked to further develop, within the context of the FP6, research

into digital film distribution and projection techniques (eCinema) which would enable several language versions of a film to be easily produced.

While revising the *'Television without Frontiers'* directive, the Commission should also look into desirability and feasibility of TV broadcasters to promote European films and to partly invest in the film industry. A European agency responsible for encouraging the production of European programmes was also suggested, together with a European Cinematic Heritage Foundation in order to safeguard the European cinema heritage.



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## **Commission new Internet service for broadcasting launched**

The DG for Education and Culture has launched a free Internet service for broadcasting called *Tvlink Europe*, which provides information on Community policies for education, professional training, culture, broadcasting, sport and other actions to promote dialogue with civil society. Visit: <http://www.tvlink.org/educationandculture/en/home.htm>.



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## **Consumer Protection**

### **Parliament report on approximation of civil and commercial laws adopted**

On 15 November, Parliament approved the resolution by MEP Lehne (A5-0384/2001) urging the Commission to submit a detailed action plan to approximate member states' civil and commercial laws. This is necessary in order to ensure better co-ordination of existing Community legislation in that area and to deal with the increasing number of cross-border economic and legal relationships resulting from the introduction of the Euro and eCommerce.

Parliament calls on the Commission to take the following steps:

- by the end of 2004, compile a database of national legislation and case law, in all Community languages, while promoting comparative law research in order to find common legal concepts;
- from 2005, promote the dissemination of results of comparative analysis and guarantee the application of such results. Proposals for European legislation to implement these results should be submitted from 2006;
- from 2010, a body to take account of common legal concepts and solutions

(contract law) should be established.

Furthermore, Parliament calls on the Commission to base its proposals on article 95 of the EC Treaty in order to ensure the codecision procedure. The report can be found at: [http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default_en.htm), under latest reports.



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## Co-operation with third countries

### EU/African Caribbean Pacific (ACP) strategy calls for electronic development

On 30 October, the EU/ACP assembly unanimously adopted a report by MEP Junker which calls for increasing access to global communications as a contribution to sustainable development. In addition, the assembly called on the EU to adopt, in the framework of the EU's development policy, a programme to develop ICT in ACP countries. Such programme would also include actions to develop infrastructure and content. Content should be made available in all dominant languages and dialects in order to both disseminate and cultivate regional traditions and cultures. Other actions included are aimed at establishing systems and mechanisms that enable rural and remote communities to have access to information e.g. education, business or health.

As a recommendation on financing the programme, the assembly suggested that each State should encourage the private sector to participate promoting thus, competition. Furthermore, the assembly advised the Commission and Parliament, in preparation for the world summits on information society in Geneva (2003) and Tunis (2005), to organise conferences and seminars to discuss concepts and successful projects. Further information can be found at: <http://www.acpsec.org/gb/apbxle/Alle.htm>.



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## New Euromed Youth programme adopted

On 5 November, the EU/Mediterranean ministers took note of the second phase of the **Euromed Heritage** programme, to be launched at the beginning of 2001. In addition, the second phase of the **Euromed Audiovisual** programme will be carried out as soon as activities have been evaluated. As regards the **Euromed Youth**, the European

Commission launched on 29 November the second phase of the programme for the next three years (2002-2004), with a budget increase of over 40%. The programme is aimed at young people from member states and Mediterranean countries - Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. From 2002 onwards, **Euromed Youth II** will be part of t